

JUL 25 2007



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we enclose for your review the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) for a joint amendment to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico (Amendment 14) and the Fishery Management Plan for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (Amendment 27).

The FSEIS analyzes the impacts of a range of alternatives identified in joint Amendment 27/14 to the respective FMPs. The actions constitute a revised rebuilding plan that has at least a 50 percent probability of rebuilding the red snapper stock by 2032. Preferred alternatives are intended to reduce the catch, bycatch, and discard mortality from the directed commercial and recreational fishery, as well as the shrimp fishery. Actions include a reduction in total allowable catch (TAC) for red snapper, harvesting restrictions to constrain catch to the TAC, and actions to reduce discard mortality in the directed fisheries. Bycatch and discard mortality in the shrimp fishery will be addressed by establishing a target reduction goal for juvenile red snapper taken in shrimp trawls and implementing, as necessary, time-area closures to meet the red snapper bycatch mortality target.

NOAA is not required to respond to comments received during the agency's 30 day as a result of the issuance of the FSEIS. However, comments received by September 4, 2007 will be reviewed and considered for their impact on issuance of a record of decision (ROD). Please send comments to the responsible official identified below. The ROD will be made available publicly following final agency action on or after September 4, 2007.

Responsible Program Official:

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Sincerely,

Rodney F. Weiher, Ph.D.  
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure



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